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ABSTRACT

The first section of this booklet describes a six-week summer workshop designed for children, ages five to thirteen, who have moderate to serious learning problems. In the morning session, teachers worked with the children individually or in small groups. In the afternoon, teachers assessed student abilities and devised individualized instruction that matched the special interests of the teachers with the needs of the students. The booklet lists behaviors and problems that inhibit successful classroom behavior and describes four tests (auditory skills, diagnostic arithmetic, diagnostic reading, and individual achievement) used in the program. The second half of the booklet outlines reading games and activities for children with learning problems. These games have been devised to sharpen student awareness in areas of sense discrimination, language development, and perception of time and space. (MAI)

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Supplement to
A TEACHER'S NOTEBOOK: ALTERNATIVES FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING PROBLEMS

LEARNING ALTERNATIVES IN THE SUMMER: ONE PROGRAM

Sherry R. Migdail

READING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

Priscilla L. Vail

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Order Information

The original Teacher's Notebook: Alternatives for Children with Learning Problems, published in 1975, is available at $3.00 a copy. Additional copies of this Supplement are $2.00 each. The special combination price for both books, when they are ordered as a set, is $4.00. Orders should be addressed to:

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS
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CONTENTS

Introduction v

LEARNING ALTERNATIVES IN THE SUMMER: ONE PROGRAM 1
by Sherry R. Migdail

I. The Children 1
II. Diagnostic Information and Tests 6
III. The Parents 18

READING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES 21
by Priscilla L. Vail

Space 22
Time 23
Visual Discrimination 25
Visual Memory 27
Auditory Discrimination 31
Auditory Memory 32
Language, both Receptive and Expressive 33
Enthusiastic Awareness of Self 35

Introduction

In the two years since the publication of A Teacher's Notebook: Alternatives for Children with Learning Problems by NAIS in 1975, we have conducted two six-week summer workshops at the Beauvoir School, Washington, D.C., for independent and public school children from five to thirteen who have moderate to serious learning problems. We work with the children in the morning, and in the afternoon we offer courses for adults who work with children having similar problems during the school year.

The great age range of the children, possible only during a summer session, helps us gain insights into developmental learning processes that are often missed when children are matched more homogeneously and chronologically. During the school year, when every minute of teaching time counts and one is not permitted the luxury of "watchful waiting," direct intervention and frequent consultation with colleagues is often delayed and sometimes ignored. A persistent problem may be recognized, but it is generally assessed by a diagnostician who is not the teacher and who may not even discuss the problem with the child's teacher.

In our summer workshop, the diagnostician is the same person who plans and gives instruction. Our summer staff members consult one another daily when a concern seems immediate. One of us can always "come to see Susie" or "watch John when he writes." We then help work out the elements of a child's problem. For example, is Susie having trouble finding the names for pictures because the pictures are unfamiliar, or does she lack the vocabulary with which to describe them? While a second diagnostic teacher works with Susie, the attending staff teacher and other observers have a chance to stand back and take notes.

Any incident, any activity, any new process is then presented during the afternoon session, as seems necessary. Teachers "observe" only for a short time because they begin to get involved with the children very quickly. At staff conferences, held each Friday, each child is considered. We evaluate each child's learning problem and the context in which the problem has been found. Including the context helps us move from a purely diagnostic framework to an instructional one. In the summer program, diagnosis and treatment are very close, since the entire team reads the workup and immediately presses for matching instruction and assessment.

In as much sequence as six weeks will allow, all of us evaluate the children and their tasks in terms of how to teach them as well as what to teach them. We find out more about assessing learning behavior as it relates to classroom performance and to developmental probabilities.

From our summer experiences, we have added to the group of tests and evaluations that were listed in Chapter II of Alternatives for Children with Learning Problems. We have found some ways of using the materials mentioned in Chapter II with greater success since analyzing their express purposes and the uses to which we had been putting them. We have gained new respect for reliable research and have begun to design small research projects based on our own test results. We have learned to hypothesize, to ask the right questions.

These summer workshops have also helped us to find better ways for professional staff, children, and parents to communicate. We feel that some of our work with parents has been especially successful. The two parent evenings stimulated much good discussion, and we learned from conferences with parents--often the key to understanding a child's problem--that parents'

expectations can be so far beyond the capacity of the child that he cannot cope with the cognitive aspects of his development or the social and emotional aspects of his growth.

Perhaps the most important result of our experience has been our discussions with colleagues at workshops and meetings around the country. Much of their work parallels ours. A meeting with Priscilla Vail, the reading specialist at Rippowam-Cisqua School, in Bedford, New York, in Chicago last year was most fortuitious and probably inevitable. Her work, especially with young children, forms the second part of this supplement. Although Mrs. Vail writes her word games for children in kindergarten through grade 4, they can easily be used with older children.

We hope that our observations and suggestions will provide fresh alternatives for children with learning problems. This supplement is gratefully dedicated to Emily Boyd, Jeanne Cullander, Pamela Korbel, all our summer workshop participants, and to Elizabeth Latchford, who came as a student the first year and as an aide the second.

Sherry R. Migdail
Beauvoir School
Washington, D.C.

LEARNING ALTERNATIVES IN THE SUMMER: ONE PROGRAM

by Sherry R. Migdail

I. The Children

Our work with children reaffirms the fact that generalizations are difficult and that children themselves defy the categories into which we so often place them.

We can assume that children with learning problems work well in small groups (1) when there is a large enough main group to generate and carry out learning activities; (2) when each child is given time to contribute to the group, to the best of his ability, from his own store of knowledge; and (3) when exchange of ideas and information is encouraged.

There is also room, in this context, for a child to work individually with the teacher, which is especially useful when the child needs a specific "bit" of learning that he or she has missed elsewhere and cannot get from the group. It is the "social transmission" of small-group learning that appears to be most helpful, and the peer pressure most stimulating, to children.

Once basic diagnostic information has been assembled, the primary concern is how to group children for the greatest possible involvement in activities and with one another. The following chart, showing the ages and grades completed of all the children in our two summer workshops (profiles for each of the two years are similar) illustrates the problems of grouping. Age spans and ranges are given in years and months.

Grade completed	No. of children	Age span		
		Min.	Max.	Range
Nursery	1	-	4.11	-
Kindergarten	5	5.7	7.2	1.7
*Grade 1	11	6.8	8.4	1.8
**Grade 2	9	7.4	9.2	1.10

Grade completed	No. of children	Age span		
		Min.	Max.	Range
Grade 3	10	8.2	9.7	1.5
Grade 4	3	9.11	10.4	0.5
***Grade 5	2	11.1	12.3	1.2
Grade 6	2	11.11	12.5	0.6
Grade 7	1	-	12.9	-

*One child had completed an ungraded Montessori class that our staff felt was equivalent to grade 1 elsewhere. Another child had entered nursery school one year after the other children because of language problems; hence the age range.

**One child had repeated grade 1, and one had repeated grade 2.

***One child had repeated grade 5.

Although our sample is small, it is clear that decisions about grouping children must be based on the needs of the children at each end of the age span. Although each child on the scale presumably works at a similar academic level, we can be fairly certain that the social and emotional needs of the first grader aged 6.8 are quite different from those of his grademate aged 8.4.

In our group, the academically more able child who completed grade 2 at age 7.4, when placed in a group of children who had completed grade 1, tended to be a bully. At the extreme ends of the entire scale, the youngest children formed a group of their own, and the oldest ones felt that grouping them with younger children was an intrusion.

At first, it was more expedient for us to group the children according to the grade they had completed and to rewrite materials or rearrange tasks to suit their emotional or social needs. Although reading games could be used for a wide age span, comprehension questions varied, for factual questions were easier for young children and inferential questions for the older children in the same group. We also learned how children answer questions by giving the same reading assignment to two groups of children.

Although we didn't discover any hard and fast rules, we did find, for example, that the younger the child, the more literal his definitions.

All of the children were "learning to learn." A number of them, having felt failure, were coping in various ways--some by retreating from tasks they were sure they couldn't do, some by completing their work too quickly and very inaccurately to prove that they could work as fast as any other child, some by interrupting other children and teachers, some by doing their damnedest to do their best.

Several children came to the summer program filled with anxiety and apprehension, and others were unmotivated to do very much of anything. By the end of the first week, most of them were in a better frame of mind. Those who were enthusiastic and felt they had parental support worked very well.

It is not possible to have four- and five-year-old children in a summer program unless staff people are specially assigned to work with them. We found that an aide, supervised by the staff teacher, was essential. Distractibility, the need to set limits, the desire for instant gratification and individual attention, and the uneven pattern of development were very apparent in our youngest children.

One highly verbal five-year-old had no visual organization. Simple tangrams, cutting or pasting, and even a 10-piece puzzle made him dizzy. So that he could work with materials he needed for correcting his problem, he became a group of one for parts of the day. Another five-year-old, whose delayed language problems were considerable, found group discussion beyond him, so he too was a group of one at certain times of the day. With an aide, learning sessions for these children could be arranged so that the

child could either work individually with the aide or in a group part of each day.

We experimented systematically with matching the special interests and abilities of the teachers to the needs of the children. It was entirely possible, for instance, to identify all children with gross auditory problems. These children could work with a teacher who was especially interested in auditory behaviors. Often the large group of multiaged children was rearranged chronologically. We used commercial and teacher-prepared tapes as well as games and exercises emphasizing auditory memory, sound-symbol association, selective listening, and auditory-motor activities. We also identified a group of children who needed help with math skills. Much of our work in math was based on games, which were often created to teach a specific concept or process.

We devised language activities that cut across grade and age levels to help reluctant and apprehensive language users to articulate. Two groups worked well together if the activity didn't take too long. In three days, the two older groups planned, wrote, and typed a newspaper, which they later ran off and distributed. Often groups came together to share their writing. And once or twice writing projects became a total-group activity.

For the benefit of one youngster whose imagination knew few bounds and for whom the real was often very close to the imagined, each teacher developed a sequence of "whopper" stories. For two of the groups, the stories were individually told and written; for the other two, they were group tales. These were shared by all the children

Language experiences took many forms. At least once a week, for the entire group of multiaged children, a teacher told a story, wrote it down one sentence at a time, and distributed the sentences at random to the

children. It was their task to retell the story by putting themselves in proper sequence. The more fanciful tales were illustrated by the younger children, with the drawings placed sequentially beside the sentences.

Sometimes a group wrote and then taped a "radio" play or recorded a story well annotated by pictures. Another group wrote a tale on a wall chart for the rest to read and enjoy. Someday we must have a "book and author luncheon" and bind their work.

We celebrated birthdays during the midmorning snack and juice break, and a special professional magic show was brought about by a reading of "The Lemonade Trick" by one group of children.

We realized very quickly that children with learning problems need to be happy and need to want to come to a summer program, especially on very hot days. There is very little "fat" for watchful waiting time. The intricacy of grouping remains challenging, but appropriate grouping is essential to maintaining the social, the emotional, and the cognitive and academic health of the children.

Untoward incidents were few. The tempers of two older boys flared into a quick explosion during the fifth week of the second summer. Provocation was slight. One of the boys cried when the fight was over. He was worried, he said, that the summer would end and that he would not enjoy winter school. Separation from his successful experience was going to be hard.

II. Diagnostic Information and Tests

Various kinds of behavior that inhibit or impede successful classroom experiences are broadly characteristic of, though not categoric for, children with learning problems. They may be immediately obvious in a diagnostic interview, or they may come to light over a period of time in the classroom.

Here is a list of problems and observable classroom behaviors that we have encountered most often in our summer workshops.

General problem	Observable classroom behavior
Lags in motor development	Has poor handwriting and copying skills Doesn't imitate body movements easily
Easily distracted	Can't focus on a task Willing to distract others
Lags in auditory attention	Doesn't seem to listen to instructions Doesn't react when instructions are repeated Fails to recall instructions given earlier
Disorganized	Can't follow sequence of tasks, especially when complete task can't be pictured Doesn't quite know how to initiate or undertake work Often can't complete a task once undertaken Has special difficulty with writing tasks, despite teacher assistance
Visually disoriented	Avoids visual concentration (puzzles, block designs) Has poor visual memory (copy games, spelling)
Fiercely competitive	Unusually demanding of teacher's and other children's time May be a poor loser, change rules
Lacks humor; apathetic	Doesn't like patently "funny" jokes Rarely tells jokes or riddles

General problem	Observable classroom behavior
Immature	Doesn't cooperate with set limits Feels rules are not for him or her Acts like a much younger child
Unpredictable	Day to day performance very inconsistent May be successful in or discouraged by the same task on the same day
Doesn't understand time: things happening at the same time (synchrony), equal time intervals (rhythm), ordering of events (sequence)	Doesn't know how to tell time Doesn't know how to interpret a calendar Can't keep a beat Can't repeat the order of sounds in words
Doesn't understand relationships	Doesn't know the pattern of family members Has trouble understanding cause and effect
Delayed language development	Doesn't tell a coherent story Often lacks ideas Has poor command of words; can't find specific word Doesn't choose to participate when speaking is required Listens well but doesn't respond easily to questions
Language background differences	May need to recode from one language to another, causing slower reaction to many academic activities

Several months before the workshop began, I saw each child in a diagnostic interview that lasted anywhere from half an hour to more than an hour. I used part of the interview time to take the child to the workshop room so that he could see where he would be on the first day and therefore be able to leave parents behind more easily. I used another portion of the interview to make sure that the child knew why he was there and to assure him that coming to a summer session would be productive, not punitive. The rest of the interview concentrated on the child and his academic strengths and/or problems.

We asked parents to bring us whatever records they had--school grades

and teachers' comments, clinical reports, and medical reviews, when appropriate. The parents, who were also asked to evaluate their child's potential and capacity, were unusually open and frank in all of our discussions.

Within a week after they were tested, children were either accepted in or rejected from the program. The summer staff met to discuss any child about whom I had some doubt, for we didn't want to accept a child unless we felt that our combined efforts would help his or her further development.

It is obvious, with most testing and assessment materials, that their effectiveness depends on the person who uses them. Even the best of tests, when used by untrained people who do not observe their subjects as they test, will give unsatisfactory results.

In Alternatives for Children with Learning Problems, we described a number of tests and evaluation materials. Several other instruments that we have used in our summer workshops and during the school year are reviewed here. Most of these can be administered by the teacher. If given by a diagnostician, the results should be discussed with the teacher.

Goldman-Fristoe-Woodstock Auditory Skills Test Battery

American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minn. 55014

The auditory discrimination portion of this test series was described on pages 22-23 of the Alternatives notebook. Three other tests have since been added: Selective Attention, Auditory Memory, and Sound-Symbol.

Selective Attention Test

Since the Selective Attention Test does not differ very significantly from the Auditory Discrimination Test, a school may decide not to use both.

The procedures are similar, and the level of complexity of the pictures in the presentation may be the only difference between the two tests. Because we prefer the Auditory Discrimination Test, we have had little experience with the Selective Attention Test. (In his review of the Auditory Discrimination Test, Alex Ballantyne, in Journal of Learning Disabilities, March 1975, pp. 130-131, says that it is basically a test of auditory closure, since identifying pictures requires matching against past experience, or long-term memory, rather than immediate comparison between two stimuli presented almost simultaneously.)

Auditory Memory Tests

The G-F-W Auditory Memory Tests consist of three tests: Recognition Memory (short-term memory for words), Memory for Content (recognition of the elements of an auditory event with no regard for sequence), and Memory for Sequence (ordering pictures as they have been presented).

Each test can be given in relation to the others or separately. A profile for the total performance is given, however. The tests, which take about seven minutes each, can be administered by a teacher who has some skill in testing. The tests have age norms from 3 years, 10 months, to 85 years. Each test has a short printed training procedure, which is followed by the taped portion of the tests. The speaker has a clear, well-modulated voice. During the training procedure, the tester is free to help the child learn the word-picture associations. The tester should be certain that the child can make the associations and knows what is expected of him.

These tests are designed to identify subjects who have defective memory skills. The manual provides percentile ranks and age-equivalent scores.

Stannines--a standard measure often available in achievement tests, given in a scale of nine equidistant steps--and standard scores are also available.

1. Recognition Memory. The tester explains that he or she will be saying words that may be repeated. If the child has heard a word previously, he is to say "Yes"; if he has not heard the word before, he is to say "No." Once the practice set has been given, the child hears the rest of the test on earphones. The test may be discontinued if the child responds correctly to 17 out of 22 words. Using other cumulative indices, the test may be discontinued after 44, 66, 82, or 110 words, depending on the percentage of correct responses.

2. Memory for Content. In training for this test, which involves more complicated tasks, the tester says a word and shows pictures that are to be identified when the word is spoken. There is no sequence in this test. During the training procedure, the child sees only four pictures and has to identify two that are named by the tester. The last two plates require the child to point to the pictures that are not named. The test section, which begins with an identification of two pictures when four pictures are shown, becomes more complex with each plate shown. Toward the end of the test, there are nine pictures on each page, and the child indicates the two pictures that are not named.

3. Memory for Sequence. In the training procedure, the child is asked to identify, by pointing to pictures, words that are spoken. When the tape starts, the child is given pictures on cards and must put the cards in the order given by the speaker.

These three tests are useful for making certain teaching decisions. For the child who does well on all but sequence, instruction can be geared to helping his sequential memory--to paying special attention to spelling

and to following instructions. Another child may remember isolated events very well but not the sequence of those events, which means that the teacher must pay particular attention to the order of words in sentences when this child writes or reads. Thus the results of the sequential memory test may well determine the kind of instruction the child should be given.

Sound-Symbol Tests

This series of auditory tests numbers seven individual tests: Sound Mimicry, Sound Recognition, Sound Analysis, Sound Blending, Sound-Symbol Association, Reading of Symbols, and Spelling of Sounds. Norms are given for ages 3 years, 4 months, to 85 years for all tests but Reading of Symbols, which is suggested for children above the age of 6 years, 5 months. It is never necessary to give all seven tests to each child.

1. Sound Mimicry. The child is given nonsense syllables, which he is to imitate immediately after oral presentation. This test, which measures short-term memory of nonmeaningful materials, may be used as a backup for other short-term memory tests. The imitation also involves some auditory discrimination.

2. Sound Recognition. In training for this test, the child is asked to point to pictures named by the tester so as to become acquainted with the words that will be used in the test. The last two training words are given one sound at a time. The rest of the test, which is on tape, consists of 30 plates to be identified by hearing the individual sounds in each word. The child must synthesize what he hears in order to get the needed word.

3. Sound Analysis. This test measures ability to locate sounds in nonsense words. During the training, the tester must be certain that the

child knows beginning, middle, and end as a concept; for example, the child must identify the sounds he hears--"What is the first sound in 'wush'?"

4. Sound Blending. The child, given a word one part at a time, is then asked to give the whole word. The blending test, done on tape, consists of 33 words, the longest of which has seven separate sounds. This test also involves auditory closure.

5. Sound-Symbol Association. This test depends upon the child's ability to recall both visually and aurally. It is difficult for the child who has poor visual organization to concentrate on this test. He is given the name of a symbol (nonmeaningful) and shown a picture of that symbol. He is then asked to find the symbol in a field of 12 others, some of which are the same as the symbol in question. All of them are printed in black ink. At the end of the test, the child has to identify two symbols after hearing their names. This test identifies those children who combine excellent visual and auditory skills--both of which are used together most of the time in the classroom. It also helps to distinguish the auditory from the visual child.

6. Reading of Symbols. Seventy nonsense words are presented to the child, who is required to read them in accordance with standard English phonetic and linguistic patterns. The Reading Error Inventory, on which the test is scored, can be invaluable, since it analyzes each nonsense word according to its component parts: single consonants and digraphs, consonant blends, vowels, and multisyllabic words (for syllable skills). This test, carefully reviewed by the teacher, can provide a good deal of information about how to teach reading, for it isolates those clusters of sounds that a

child cannot read and thus highlights the tasks that the child must learn to perform.

7. Spelling of Sounds. This test can be given only to children who have some writing experience--perhaps beginning with those in the middle of first grade. The tester gives the instructions; the test itself--involving 50 nonsense words--is on tape. The child is asked to pronounce a word after he has heard it spoken, then to write it on the "Spelling Response Form," which has numbered, widely spaced lines. The test may be stopped after the child has missed five consecutive words. A child who is a poor speller should not be taught to read or spell phonetically, but should be taught linguistic structure.

Each of these seven tests is based on sound research principles. Nonsense and nonmeaningful materials are used in order to isolate elements in language and remove the testing from other classroom experiences where failure may have been felt. Also, children are not as threatened by nonsense as they are by real words.

Scoring takes some practice, but it is relatively simple. Some people may prefer percentiles to grade equivalents. The profile for all seven tests makes instructional planning for diagnostic matching far more efficient. It eliminates the need for reporting that says, "This child presents evidence of auditory problems." Instead, it suggests, "This child recognizes and can repeat words within 10 seconds, but he has no memory for sequence." The first kind of report confirms what the teacher already knows, whereas the second kind helps the teacher help the child with sequence patterns in reading and writing.

Key Math
Diagnostic Arithmetic Test

Austin Connally, William Nachtman, E. Milo Prichett
American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minn. 55014

Key Math, individually administered to children from preschool to grade 6 in evaluating mathematical ability and skills, is useful for diagnosing academic deficits in children with learning problems. Fourteen subtests are arranged in order of increasing difficulty, with each organized into areas of content, operations, and applications. They cover numeration, fractions, geometry, symbols, four computational processes (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division), mental computation, numerical reasoning, word problems, missing elements, money, and measurement. Problems call for verbal answers to items presented in open-ended fashion and often in conjunction with colored pictures.

Key Math is well constructed, unthreatening, and fun to take. The excellent manual explains clearly how to administer the test. The test evaluates the child on four levels: grade equivalent scores; scores for content, operations, and applications; general profile; and analysis of performance on individual items.

Key Math should be part of every standard battery that involves math skills and tasks. Our only criticism is that there may be too large a scoring jump between some items, from relatively simple to relatively complex items, with too few steps in between.

Roswell-Chall Diagnostic Reading Test

Essay Press
P.O. Box 22206
San Diego, Calif. 92122

This simple word analysis skills test, administered by the teacher in a

matter of minutes, points up instructional needs in word analysis. It is generally appropriate for grades 1-6. The test includes single consonants, consonant combinations, short vowels, the rule of silent e, vowel combinations, and syllabification. These phonic elements may be measured in other tests, but for the teacher who needs an immediate spot check this test is invaluable.

Peabody Individual Achievement Test

Lloyd M. Dunn and Fredrick C. Markwardt
American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minn. 55014

The PIAT is a clinically popular, high-quality, individually administered achievement test. It contains five subtests--Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, General Information, Reading Recognition, and Spelling--with items arranged in ascending order of difficulty. The range is kindergarten through adult, and the time for the entire battery is about 40 minutes. Reading Comprehension is pictorial and spatial, which may help those children who have difficulty with words. The spelling subtest involves word recognition, with multiple-choice items rather than word recall. If the tester is aware that word recognition and word recall are two separate abilities, this test can serve an important diagnostic purpose.

The accompanying tables are excellent, and the manual is very informative. Grade equivalents, age equivalents, percentiles, and standard scores are available for each test. The profile is useful for making specific teaching decisions.

Language Comprehension

We have looked for a thorough test of children's language comprehension,

and, while we have examined a number of tests, we have not found one instrument that suits all our purposes. None of those standardized versions seems to tell us about how well a child generates language. Three that we have tried are (1) ACLC Assessment of Children's Language Comprehension (1973 revision), by Rochana Foster, Jane J. Giddan, and Joel Stark, Consulting Psychologists Press., Inc., 577 College Ave., Palo Alto, Calif. 94306; (2) Northwestern Syntax Screening Test (1971), by Laura L. Lee, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill. 60201; and (3) Peabody Language Kit, American Guidance Service, Inc., Publisher's Building, Circle Pines, Minn. 55014.

Our own preference is the old standby of showing a group of children a picture and asking them to tell about it, make up a story about it, identify parts of it, or any combination of the above. Children in a group tend to help one another and share language clues. Language testing should take place in a group, since language is not generated in a vacuum. We tape our children and listen to their use of syntax and words (in relation to their age). We also want to know whether they are coherent and can follow a "story line." At the same time, if we turn the conversation into imaginative channels, a child or children may even show some real creativity. The grammatical closure subtest of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities (ITPA; see Alternatives notebook, pp. 12-14) is useful for knowing a child's syntactical maturity.

Following is a partial list of publishers who continue to produce good materials for assessing children with learning problems.

Academic Therapy Publications
1539 Fourth St.
San Rafael, Calif. 94901

American Guidance Service, Inc.
Publisher's Building
Circle Pines, Minn. 55014

Consulting Psychologists Press, Inc.
577 College Ave.
Palo Alto, Calif. 94306

Fearon Publishers
Education Division
6 Davis Dr.
Belmont, Calif. 94002

Educators Publishing Service, Inc.
75 Moulton St.
Cambridge, Mass. 02138

Kenworthy Educational Service, Inc.
P.O. Box 3031
Buffalo, N.Y. 14205

There must be many other publishers who develop test materials. The companies listed here are those by whom we have been most impressed. We also continue to use the test materials described in the Alternatives notebook. Of those, the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests have been a most valuable addition to our diagnostician's assessment battery.

III. The Parents

Our summer program brings together all the parents of our children for one meeting during the fifth week of the session. We encourage parents to keep in touch through conferences at all other times, but we don't invite them to visit classes when we are in session because of our multiage grouping and our somewhat tight quarters.

At our meeting with parents, we outline our entire program and ask for questions and reactions. We have set up some suggestions for the parent who asks, "How can I help my child?" that combine good parent-child relations and educational philosophy. They are not listed here in any order of preference.

1. Set distinct limits for your child so that he and you know how you want him to spend his time.
2. Do not put too much pressure on your child to learn, for the role of teacher--especially if you view the teacher in any authoritarian way--is difficult to maintain.
3. Praise and reinforce your child for his successes, however small they may seem to you. Do not give praise when it is not deserved.
4. When you work with your child, and before you get involved in any formal time and space arrangements, consult your teacher so that you and the teacher complement each other. Don't surprise the teacher by saying suddenly that you have been teaching your child to read at home.
5. Keep working sessions short, fun for both, and stop while interest is high in order to maintain motivation.
6. Use materials at home--kitchen math, old magazines, shopping lists, telephone books, old catalogues. Don't use workbooks or commercial materials, which the child will expect to find at school.
7. Read aloud with, to, at, and by your child, using materials you have chosen together at the public library. Enjoy what you do with your child and books. Make it obvious that you are also interested.

8. If you are reading with your child--he one line, you one line (or page)--use identical books so that he can follow along in his own way, using his finger or a marker as a guide. He may have a very different pace from your own.

9. Use time in the car, at dinner, together in a happy way. You can make up games that are played just in those places and that you and your child look forward to. Encourage storytelling, and encourage telling stories in acceptable sequence.

10. If your child cannot begin a task, begin it for or with him. Don't allow constant frustration or the flareup that comes from parent-child confrontations.

11. For some children, a task checklist is useful. If a reward is in the offing for completed tasks, be sure that the child selects the reward, that you approve it, and that it is indeed forthcoming.

12. Enjoy your child. Be sure that your expectations are reasonable. Your anxieties are all too easily communicated.

READING GAMES AND ACTIVITIES

by Priscilla L. Vail

What a delight it is to collaborate with Sherry Migdail. Our philosophies are similar, and I am glad that even though geography separates Washington and New York this common cover allows us to combine the thoughts we both have for all children.

In language as in life, children will either avoid or attempt or advance. In language, unfamiliarity with words begets avoidance, avoidance begets more unfamiliarity, and thus a pattern is established that hinders learning. We can help a child to break that pattern, or prevent its emergence, by providing familiarity with words both big and little, by playing with words, taking them apart, and reassembling them.

Because grownups take reading so seriously, children often feel the seriousness of the task rather than the joy. A little frivolity is entirely appropriate, particularly for those children to whom reading does not come easily or automatically. A sense of easiness and being at home with language will promote contact, awareness, and experimentation. It is a bad pun but a true statement that familiarity breeds attempt.

Here are eight "awarenesses" useful for reading:

space
time
visual discrimination
visual memory
auditory discrimination
auditory memory
language, both receptive and expressive
enthusiastic awareness of self

Children who have all of these will doubtless read with ease, which is to say that they will advance. Children who have some of them will attempt, which

gives them a shot at success. Children who have few of them will avoid; the prognosis for them is clear. Noncompetitive games, which encourage experimentation and ensure success, can tempt a child away from avoidance toward attempts and then to advances.

Here are some games designed to sharpen each awareness. All of them are road-tested favorites of our students.

Space

Give each child a red rubber band for his right wrist so that he can always help himself in case of confusion and then play either Simon Says or Command Me.

Simon Says. The leader, Simon, gives commands to the group. If the instruction begins with the words "Simon says," the instruction is to be followed. If it does not, the instruction is not to be followed, and anyone who follows it is eliminated.

Command Me. One child gives an instruction to another child, who, upon carrying it out correctly, may in turn give the next instruction. To develop a child's spatial certainty, use such instructions as "Raise your right hand," "Tap your left foot," "Put your right elbow on your left knee," "Cross your ankles," "Twiddle your thumbs," "Wink your right eye," and others in which the child must identify and use right and left body parts. When these concepts are secure, move to more difficult ones, such as "Turn to your right," "Go to the window on your left," "Point to something six feet away from you," "Look to the left," "Name something behind you," "Stand between two people," and "Put your pencil underneath your shoe." Also, use as many kinds of measurement as you can: "six feet away," "two feet to your left," "shoulder height," "two giant steps," "as long as your foot," plus

as many metrics as you yourself can master. Practice such concepts as before, after, between, beneath, first, last, middle, bigger than, smaller than, the same size as, above, below, in front, in back, the same way. These are excellent for diagnostic as well as therapeutic purposes.

Time

Children can learn the important and difficult concept of time by

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Visual Discrimination

Hidden in Plain Sight. Take 10 familiar objects not usually found in a classroom and put them around the room so that they are camouflaged but not concealed. Give each child a list of the items, either in words or in rebus drawings. (Don't worry about the caliber of your art. The worse it is, the funnier the children will think it.) Each child is to hunt around for the objects and check them off on the list when they are found. It is important to do this silently instead of calling out so that the game will be an exercise in self-control as well as one in figure/ground.

Ouch, Jack! Much Slush, Slap What, Quit It, Quick! and A Thorough Thought are all elaborations on the old favorite Slapjack. Cut index cards in half

and write words ending in ch and ck or ch and sh patterns. Agree ahead of time which one will be the stimulus for the upcoming game. As in Slapjack, the first person to slap a correct stimulus card when it is dealt gets it and any others in the pile underneath it. Anyone who slaps the wrong card must forfeit his entire collection of cards. This format also lends itself beautifully to rapid discrimination of what-that-where-wear-were, quick-quite-quiet-quit it, and though-thought-through-tough-thorough-throughout-throat.

Kiss a Gorilla, which does the same thing without time pressure, teaches discrimination of look-alike words. Cut index cards in half. Write each word on two cards, once in blue and once in red. One card should have only the word written, and the other should have some kind of clue. Draw a hairy gorilla on one card. Deal all the cards. Players find the pairs in their own hands and put them down, saying the word. They then draw from one another, continuing to make pairs until one is left with the gorilla, which he must KISS. Sample word list: quit, quiet, quite, quick; through, though, thought, tough, touch, thorough, throughout; bother, brother; where, when, whether, weather; palace, place.

Kiss a Gorilla

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Visual Memory

My favorite game for visual memory is a four-step adaptation of Bingo. The last step may be omitted, if you wish. You (teacher, parent, tutor, or volunteer) choose the specific words to be used and write them in the spaces on a piece of paper marked off in a grid of either nine or 25 spaces.

Step 1. The child cuts as many slips of paper as there are spaces on the board. You tell the child the words, one at a time. (This is the appropriate time to analyze the words.) The child then writes each word on a slip of paper, naming each letter just before writing it.

Step 2. Hold the slips face down. The child picks one and matches it to the appropriate space on the board. If possible, he says the word and uses it in a sentence. If he doesn't know it, tell him what it is so that he can then use it in a sentence. Go through all the cards until each space is covered.

Step 3. Give the child as many space markers as there are spaces on the board. Then take the slips and call the words, facing away from the board. The child puts a marker on each word he hears called. When he has a complete row vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, he says "Bingo!" You can keep calling the words after that, letting him get double and triple Bingo, which children enjoy. We sometimes use candy for markers, which the children eat after their whole card has been filled.

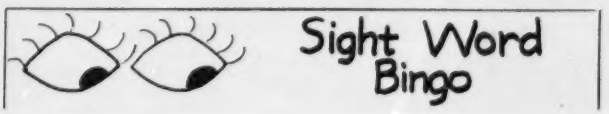
Step 4. You call the words, and the child spells them correctly. This can be done by covering the spaces with blank slips of paper. The child hears the word, spells it, checks his spelling against what is written on the board, and removes the blank cover if he is correct. If he is not correct, the blank cover stays on and you call the word again.

When more than one child is playing, use the same words but arrange them differently on each board. The challenge then is to be the first to get "Bingo!"

Caution. Step 1, having the student write the words himself, is really important, as is Step 2, which involves matching. Starting with Step 3 would jeopardize the success we are trying to build. Don't take a shortcut.

Here are some other adaptations of this kind of game.

Eye Know Bingo, also called Sight Word Bingo, is used to develop sight vocabulary. As explained above, the player first makes individual word cards, then matches these to words on the game cards. The next step is to put the small cards away and use markers. As a word is called, the child covers it with a marker. Reinforce this by spelling each word. When making game cards, start with the 220 most commonly used words given in the



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Dolch Word List. Draw eyes on the game boards to emphasize that the words on each card must be instantly recognized as whole units. Some can be decoded phonetically, but that slows the reading process. Adapt this game for any vocabulary you want to teach. A student about to study the Middle

Ages could be given fief, moat, primogeniture, lord, liege, artisan, seigneur, priest, guild. If you are going to begin a unit on Indians, you might use words such as hogan, pueblo, feather, hunt, medicine man, weave, survival, treaty, stranger.

Tough Bingo is used to help children differentiate look-alike words. These Bingo cards have 25 spaces. Use commonly difficult words, such as which, witch, trough, their, through, throughout, category, tough, fiend, laboratory, eighth, thorough, there, anonymous, moist, where, though, were, whether, friend, throw, thought, terrific, most. Words such as which and witch will have to be used in a sentence when calling them. Adapt this game by using pairs of homonyms. Children love the feeling of accomplishment that comes when homonyms are mastered.

Tough Bingo

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Color Me Spring teaches instant word recognition. Use numbers and number words, colors and color words, and seasons of the year. Cut index cards in half. Write the color word in its own color on one card, in

black on another. Play like Concentration. Match color-coded words to the words in black. Make other coded sets the same way.

Color Me Spring

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Anything Goes Bingo helps develop word recognition and can be used from third grade up. Use this game for names of states, cities, countries, continents, oceans, and planets. For a variation, have children make game cards using words in different order.

Anything Goes

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Auditory Discrimination

Catch Me. Make a pack of cards containing pairs of words having similar sounds. Take turns drawing a card. The person who draws the card makes up and says a sentence using either the correct or the incorrect word. The listener must say which. If the listener answers correctly, the turn passes to him; if not, the turn stays with the caller. Here is a sample list of words and sentences.

rate/raid. When I am hungry, I rate the icebox.
wagon/wagging. My dog is wagon his tail.
let's/less. Let's go to the movies.
except/expect. I go to school expect on weekends.
has/haves. He haves more than I do.
going to/gone to. I am going to play the piano this afternoon.
they're/there. They're all lined up and ready to go.
(Some may feel that this is a linguistic distinction, not an auditory one. Because I feel that it is a question of auditory context and necessary for spelling, I include it.)

Listen to the conversations in your own classroom and you'll soon have a huge list of pairs appropriate to your particular group.

F·A·S·T. Play this game to count the number of sounds in a word or the number of syllables in a word (invaluable prereading and prespelling work). After the age of seven, most children can separate the number of sounds in a three-letter word, quickly recognizing that cat has three components, not two. Many can do this earlier. Once you are sure your students can play a game in which you say a word, they will figure out how many sounds it has and hold up the right number of fingers. As they get better at it, bounce around among words with three sounds, words with blends at the beginning, blends at the end, or blends in both places. This exercise will have a marked carryover into spelling and reading later on.

Which. Be sure the child understands the concept of beginning, middle,

and last sound. Then start with a word such as cat. Change any one of the three sounds. After the listener says which of the three sounds has changed, it's then the listener's turn. A typical game might go: cat-cab, cab-nab, nab-nob, nob-not, not-nut, nut-hut, etc.

Auditory Memory

Stretch and Shrink. We often play these two games. Start Stretch with a very short sentence, such as "The boy ran." The first child repeats it. The caller then adds a detail: "The big boy ran." The second child must repeat it. Continue adding as each child's turn comes. As soon as it gets hard, introduce pantomime to help the children link a visual clue to the auditory stimulus. They will be delighted to discover what a help this is and see what a long and complicated story they can then remember. This game works best when the teacher is the caller. Just before things become impossible, reverse the process and play Shrink, eliminating one detail or clause each turn until you're back at the beginning.

ALL Ears. Tell the children that you are going to tell a story filled with many details and that, at the end, you are going to ask them to remember just one. With this advance warning, they won't get mad at the game--or you. Tell them to try to picture each part as you say it. A sample might be, "One sunny winter day, a little girl in red boots put both her mittened hands on the strap of her blue plastic sled to pull it up the hill to the house with black shutters." Question: "What color were her boots?" It's fun to swing this into inference, too, and the children enjoy it if they have advance warning and it's not done as a trick. An inference question for this story might be, "How do you know she wasn't eating an ice cream cone?" It is important with this as with other games to start at a

sure-fire success level and move gradually to the more esoteric ones. If you do, the children will always look forward to the games and will bring to them that special kind of energy that anticipates and begets success.

Pig Latin. This contagious delight will probably produce a school-wide epidemic. To speak in Pig Latin, take the first sound away from the beginning of a word and move it to the end, attaching "ay." Thus, "Pig Latin" becomes "Ig-pay Atin-lay."

Language, both Receptive and Expressive

Reading aloud to all children, not just very young ones, is the best way to accustom young ears to texture of language and variety of expression. Encourage your listeners to anticipate what may come next, invent alternate endings, identify with characters, act out the story, and summarize recent plot developments. In short, involve the children in active, not passive, listening and give them literary experiences while relieving them of the mechanics of reading. This is one of the greatest gifts an adult can make to a child's mind and heart.

Practically speaking, reading aloud has profound impact on a child's later ability to read independently because, in order to read with rhythm, cadence, and fluency, one must have the expected words inside, ready and waiting to be used. A skillful reader "casts a linguistic shadow," letting the eye match the linguistic expectation. To be able to do this, one needs a vocabulary of labeling words, descriptive words, and recognition (if not use) of the word endings found in such things as tenses and plurals, substitute words such as pronouns, and the kinds of relationships found among words in synonyms, antonyms, homonyms, homographs, rhymes, alliteration, and analogy.

Play as many cumulative group-score games as you can think of in order to build lists of all vocabulary elements. You can draw ladders on paper, letting each rung house a word or pair of words; adding machine tape is good for this, too. "Let's see how long a tape we can make using words that start with m." Or, "Yesterday we made a 20-rung ladder of pairs of opposites. How many rungs can we put on today's ladder?" The less nimble child can take legitimate pride in the group endeavor, whereas he might not be so proud of an individual score. Now for some games.

Moon Food. Write out an even number of two-syllable words, half on yellow index cards, half on blue. Cut each card in half so as to divide the word. Dog-ear the card with the first half. The first part of the game involves matching the halves. (Keep a list of the whole words in plain sight so that the children can refer to it when necessary.) The next step involves turning all the cards upside down, mixing them, and then joining a yellow beginning with a blue end, or vice versa, to make a new word. The new words go on a piece of paper headed "Welcome to the Moon's Finest Restaurant. Today's Menu." The group has to decide whether the new word sounds like a main dish, a beverage, or a dessert, and whether it sounds appetizing. In this simple introduction to onomatopoeia, a sample beginning of two-syllable words might include catnip, picnic, hamper, bandit, napkin, sunset, until, mistake, invite, dustbin, headboard, carwash, lantern, basket, under, mantle, enter, and apple. From such a list, one might be able to order such delicacies as unple, apnic, catter, misket, and a napwash at the Moon's Finest. (No tipping allowed.)

Zoo. For this game, you need a box with seven compartments; failing that, use seven paper cups. Fill them with slips of paper carrying words in the following categories: (1) numbers, (2) colors, (3) adjectives,

(4) body parts, (5) single consonants, blends, or digraphs found at the beginnings of words, (6) single vowels, vowel teams, or diphthongs found in the middles of words, and (7) consonants, blends, digraphs, or spelling patterns found at the ends of words. Then give the child a piece of paper that says at the top: My animal has _____ _____ _____ _____ and is called a _____. Choosing one slip of paper from each compartment, or cup, a portrait emerges of an animal that may have seven purple hairy ears and is called a groiff. Save the bottom half of the paper for an illustration. You may want to elaborate on this by naming the animal's natural habitat and what it likes to eat. One budding zoologist wrote that his animal lived on top of a tin can and ate warts.

Enthusiastic Awareness of Self

Me, Myself, and I is a book for children to write about themselves.

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Choose from among these games the ones that appeal to you and seem to fit the needs of the children you work with and bend them (the games, not the children) according to the problems and proclivities you encounter. May your students attempt and advance.